

# THE LORD'S SUPPER

**Questions and Answers.**

J. M. Davies.

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## PREFACE.

"What mean ye by this service?" (Ex. 12.26)

"What mean the testimonies and the statutes, and the judgments which the Lord our God hath commanded you?" (Deut 6.20).

The Lord not only anticipated that these and other questions would be asked by succeeding generations in Israel, but gave instructions as to how they should be answered. Hence it is but natural that similar questions should be asked relative to the Church and its Ordinances, and it is equally important that they should be answered from the Scriptures of Truth. This booklet is an attempt at answering in this manner some of these enquiries concerning the Lord's Supper that one has met in the course of one's ministry over many years in many countries. May it please the Lord to set His seal of approval upon it by making it a blessing to all, and especially to the young in Christ.

J. M. DAVIES

# THE LORD'S SUPPER

## SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

The revivals in the days of Josiah and Nehemiah were brought about by the discovery and the devout reading of the word of the Lord. The people sought to obey what was "found written". (Neh. 8.14-17. 13.1). In this they are exemplary, for repentance and a return to Scriptural principles and practices must accompany any true revival.

As the "Breaking of Bread" or the "Lord's Supper" occupied a place of central importance in the gatherings of the churches in apostolic days and later, it is essential that we should humbly and diligently enquire into the teaching of Scripture relative to it. We shall consider the subject in the form of questions and answers.

### **1. What is the authority for its observance ?**

- a) It was instituted by the Lord on the night in which He was betrayed. Matthew, Mark and Luke, each give us a record of its institution.
- b) It was practised by the Church from the day of its commencement. Acts 2.42. 20.7-8. These are the first and the last references to collective fellowship in the book, and hence it is important to note that in connection with each, mention is made of the "Breaking of Bread".
- c) A special revelation was given by the Lord to Paul with regard to it for the instruction of the churches; (1. Cor. 11.23-24).

### **2. How long was it intended to be observed ? Was it a temporary rite to be observed in apostolic days only by those converted out of Judaism ?**

The words "till He come" (1. Cor. 11.26) make it abundantly clear that it was not to be temporary in character, but was to be observed continually until the coming of the Lord. Moreover the great majority of the

Christians in Corinth had been converted from idolatry. They were of Gentile origin, and it is in a letter to them that the instructions are found as to the importance and conduct of the supper. The epistle is addressed to those at Corinth and "all that call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord in every place." Hence its teaching is both universal and age-abiding in its authority and application.

### 3. What are the Scriptures relative to it?

- a) Institutional. Matthew 26.26-29. Mark 14.22-25. Luke 22.18-20.
- b) Historical. Acts 2.42,46. 20.7.
- c) Instructional. 1. Cor. 11.17-34.

### 4. Does not John 6.22-65 refer to it?

No. In this portion the Lord was speaking of Himself as the "true bread out of heaven"; "the bread of God"; "the bread of life" and "the living bread". And He was speaking of His death as the means of life. There is no reference to "bread and wine" in the chapter. Eating His flesh and drinking His blood are synonymous with faith. This is evident by a comparison of

v.47. "He that believeth **hath eternal life**" and

v.54. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood **hath eternal life.**" It is confirmed also by the following words.

v.53. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

ch.. 8.24. "If ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins."

Thus in both a positive and a negative way the Lord shows the two to be identical. On that occasion the Lord made it clear that apart from "coming to Him" (v. 35), and believing in Him as the sent one (v. 29) and the Son of the Father (v. 40), and in His sacrificial death (v. 51) there can be no salvation. Moreover at the time the Lord uttered these words the supper had not been instituted, and in the record of its institution, not a word is said or any hint given that the communicants would thereby be made partakers of eternal life. On the contrary, the words of our Lord emphasize its commemorative character.

"In the Mass the Romanist believes that when the priest blesses the bread, it thereby becomes the body, blood, soul and divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that the priest thereby offers a continual sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead ! All of this is a blasphemous travesty of the truth of Scripture. It is idolatry and originated in the old Babylonish worship of the queen of Heaven. (Jer. 7.17-18 44.15-19). The cake is marked with the mystic letters "I.H.S" which are supposed to mean "Iesus Hominum Salvator", but they might just as well mean the Egyptian deities Isis Horus and Seb, as they did ages ago in a similar ceremony." (H. A. Ironside).

## **5. What is the relation between baptism and the breaking of bread ?**

The two are complementary. They are the only two rites ordained by the Lord. In baptism the believer's union with Christ is symbolized. He is thereby "buried with Christ" (Col. 2.12. Rom. 6.1-6). In the Lord's supper, the death of Christ for the believer is commemorated and proclaimed. The one is initial, and of necessity, not repeated, whereas the other is a weekly observance.

## **6. Who should partake of the supper ?**

Just as all believers should, in obedience to the command of the Lord, and in accordance with apostolic practice, be baptized, so all believers should recognise their responsibility and privilege to carry out the Lord's request to remember Him in the "breaking of bread". It should be a central feature of all Christian assemblies on the first day of the week.

The unconverted have neither part nor lot in the supper. In connection with the memorial passover in Israel, strict instructions were given that the stranger was not to partake of it, nor the hired servant, for "no uncircumcised person" was to eat of it. (Ex. 12.43-48). Thus care needs to be exercised lest false professors creep in unawares, but in their commendable zeal to keep out the false, the church at Ephesus had seemingly erected barriers which tended to keep out some of the true as well. They had fallen from their first estate, when their faith in the Lord Jesus was evidenced by a love to all the saints.

**7. Are the bread and wine to be understood as symbolic only?**

Yes. When the Lord used the words "This is my body" and "This is my blood" He was there in body with them. Hence the bread or loaf He held in His hand could not possibly be His actual body, or the cup be His blood. They were chosen as emblems to represent His body and blood.

"In the statements with the verb 'to-be' as the connecting predicate, the verb is never used as the equivalent of 'ginomai' to become.

comp. a) John 1.9. This is the witness of John.

b) Matth. 13.38. The field is the world.

Gal. 4.24. These two women are the two covenants

Rev. 17.9 The seven heads are seven mountains.

In a) the object is usually what it is said to be, but in b) the object represents what it is said to be." (W. E. Vine in 'The Church and the churches').

In this connection compare also 1. Cor. 10.4 "And that rock was Christ" and 2. Sam. 23.17. "Is not this the blood of the men . . . ." These illustrate the Scriptural use of the language of symbolism.

Then again, immediately after saying "This is my blood of the New Covenant. . ." the Lord said "I will not henceforth drink of this **fruit of the vine** until. . ." Thus the Lord's own words condemn the heathenish idea of transubstantiation. It was still only the blood of grapes.

**8. Is the bread symbolic of the body of the Lord Jesus only? or is it symbolic of the Church, the body of Christ also?**

It is symbolic of both. On the night in which He was betrayed the Lord spoke of it as emblematic of His own body given for us, but in 1. Cor. 10-16-17 it is spoken of as symbolic of the Church, the body of Christ. Whereas in Rom 7.4 the expression "body of Christ" refers to the "body of His flesh", the context in 1. Cor. 10. 16-17 makes it clear that it is used there with reference to the Church as in the other places where it occurs. The

words "For we being many are one bread, one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread" demand that the expression be interpreted as representing the mystical body, the Church, and that in its entirety rather than in a local character. The oneness of believers, as members of the one body is expressed by the fact that all partake of one loaf.

**9. What is indicated by the word 'blessed' as used by the Lord at the institution of the supper?**

The Evangelists who record the instituting of the supper use two words when describing what the Lord did on that occasion. Both words are now anglicized. The one is the word 'eulogise' and the other 'eucharist'. Matthew and Mark use the first and it is rendered 'blessed'. Luke, and later Paul, use the second word, which is translated 'gave thanks'. The first word means 'to speak well of', 'to ascribe praise'. It is also used in the sense of invoking or conferring blessing. (Luke 6.28. Rom. 12.14. Eph. 1.3) The fact that both Luke and Paul use the second word determines the meaning which is to be given to the word used by Matthew and Mark. And as the two words are used to describe what the Lord did it is evident that the word 'blessed' is to be understood as the 'giving of thanks'. The idea of consecrating the elements is entirely absent.

The words 'in like manner' in Luke's account and in 1. Cor. 11. 25 confirm the record of Matthew and Mark that our Lord gave thanks again before the cup was partaken of.

**10. What is the meaning of the words "Ye do show the Lord's death." (1. Cor. 11.26)?**

The word thus translated is used some 17 times in the New Testament. Its general meaning was 'to announce' or 'to proclaim'. Just as the apostle by his preaching was fulfilling his ministry as a witness, so a company of believers meeting to celebrate the Lord's supper are a witness to the Lord's death. The witness is intended for the 'unlearned and the unbelieving'. (1. Cor. 14.23-24). The suggestion that the proclamation is to unseen spiritual intelligencies is untenable, as the idea of declaring or proclaiming or preaching to the angels, or the angelic hosts is foreign to the way the word is used in the New Testament.



**11. What is its purpose or value? Is it essential to or connected with salvation?**

The Scriptures make it clear that salvation is through Christ and Christ alone; through grace and grace alone, and through faith and faith alone. Rites and ceremonies, however important in their place, do not contribute to salvation. Just as we owe the fact that we are sinners to the one act committed by the one man-Adam, so we are counted righteous through the one act of Christ, His obedience unto death, even the death of the Cross. (Rom. 5.18).

The supper is a remembrance of the Lord Himself, and a commemoration of His death, just as the Passover commemorated an accomplished redemption in Israel.

**12. Were all communicants expected to partake of both the bread and the wine? Or does the expression 'breaking of bread' suggest that they only partook of the loaf?**

The fact that 6 times over the words 'eat and drink' are found in 1. Cor. 11.23-29 is sufficient proof that all the participants ate of the bread and drank of the cup. The expression 'breaking of bread' is an illustration of the form of speech known as synecdoche, in which a part stands for the whole, such as we would understand from the words "Mr. Smith owns 100 head of cattle" or "Mr. Jones employs 1000 hands."

**13. Is it necessary that there should be a person who is considered as having been specially set apart to the ministry, one who is ordained (so-called) or a clergyman, present to officiate at the supper?**

As acknowledged by Bishop Lightfoot and others, there is no sacerdotal or hierarchical system in Christianity. In this it differs from Judaism. Uzziah became a leper for presuming to do the work of a priest. The words "we have an altar" refer to Christ and His redemptive work, as foreshadowed in the altar of burnt-offering, and the sacrifices offered thereon. An altar would need a sacrificing priest, but the word for such a person (Hierus), in accordance with what the late Dr. Griffith Thomas called "the unmistakable control of the Holy Spirit in the composition of the New Testament" is reserved exclusively for the Lord Jesus Christ. In the New

Testament Scriptures there is no such line drawn as is known in Christendom between what are termed the clergy and the laity. The only priesthood mentioned therein, apart from that of Christ, is that which is common to all believers. (1 Pet. 2.5-9). The setting apart of individuals by what is called 'ordination' to an official position whereby they are elevated to a priestly rank, entitling them to special privileges, from which the laity(?) are debarred, is without Scripture warrant. It is at the root of clerisy in all its forms, and is a denial in practice of the priesthood of all believers. Expressions such as "dispensing the elements" or "administering the sacrament" or "conducting the communion" are all foreign to the New Testament. Their use is an evidence of the way in which Judaism has permeated the thinking of Christians and the practices of Christendom. Similarly the idea that there should be one to preside at or guide the gathering has no basis or sanction in Scripture. Such a procedure would inevitably lead to clericalism and an officiating priest.

**14. a) Did the Lord break the loaf?**

Yes. This is clearly stated in the portions relative to the supper.

**b) Did He pour the cup?**

It is not so stated. But from the use of the word which is translated "shed" or "poured" it is inferred that He did so. But this is an inference only. The deduction is one that is not clearly established. The words "In like manner also the cup..." do not lend support to the view that He did.

**15. Is there any symbolic significance to be attached to the fact that the Lord broke the bread? Is there any connection between that act and the words "This is my body which is broken for you" (1. Cor. 11.24 AV)?**

In the Old Testament Scriptures it had been very definitely prophesied that "A bone of Him shall not be broken". (Ex. 12.46. Num. 9.12. Ps. 34.20). At the time of the crucifixion these were in a most remarkable way literally fulfilled. (John 19-31-37.)

In the records of the institution of the supper Matthew and Mark simply state "This is my body", Luke

adds the words "which is given for you". But in the Corinthian passage as rendered in the AV the words "which is broken for you" are found. The RV leaves out the word "broken", and in view of the fact that the word is not found in any of the gospel records, and what is stated as to the miraculous preservation of His body, and of the restraining hand of God upon those who had intended to break His legs, it would seem inconsistent to insert the word 'broken' in 1. Cor. 11.24. The body was given, but **not broken**.

While His back was lacerated with the stripes, leaving 'long furrows'; and the crown of thorns placed by callous hands must have cut the skin; and His hands and feet and side were pierced, yet these viewed singly or together as in Isa. 52.14 "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men" do not suggest that the body was broken. Strong gives the meaning of the word 'marred' as disfigurement. The word epitomizes and summarizes the effect of the sufferings described in detail in Ch. 53. The words used: 'stricken' 'smitten' 'afflicted' 'wounded' 'bruised' describe a violent death and connote extreme agony and suffering. But the word 'broken' is not used. Hence it is better to adhere to the words of our Lord "This is my body which is given for you." However let no one make another an offender for a word in this matter.

"While Scripture declares that no bone of Him was broken, it likewise gives no suggestion that the wounds in His hands, feet and side, were the breaking of the body." (W. E. Vine on 1. Cor. 11.24).

Moreover as the "life of the flesh is in the blood" the very fact that the bread and the cup, as representing the body and blood of the Lord, were separate on the table is a clear indication that, at the institution of the supper, the Lord viewed His death as an accomplished fact, the body already given and the blood already shed. Hence there was no need of any further act to portray His death, and the implications of the suggestion that the Lord's action in breaking the bread was symbolical are rather serious. Therefore we consider that there was no symbolical significance intended in what the Lord did. As the host on that occasion He broke it in accordance with custom and for the convenience of the disciples. It enabled them to partake of it.

**16. If we assume that the Lord poured the cup, was there anything symbolic in the act?**

As the cup was emblematic of the "shed blood" it was a mute but eloquent symbol of the fact that death was viewed as already having taken place. Hence there was no further act needed to illustrate or symbolize His death. The drink-offering was fulfilled in the shedding of the blood, the giving of the life. This was already represented in the cup being separate from the bread, and did not need to be further signified by the pouring of the cup. The fact of the bread and wine being separate, and thereby being symbolic of death having taken place, can hardly be over-emphasized in view of the blasphemous idolatry of the Romish Mass.

**17. What is the significance of the expression "The cup of blessing" ?**

In his pamphlet on "The Jewish Passover and the lessons from the four cups" Mr. M. Kagan states that Palestine Jews use four cups at the Passover supper. These are

- "1. The cup of blessing. All surrounding the family table drink of it. None is excluded. Luke 22.20 1. Cor. 10.16.
2. The cup of wrath or judgment. None drink of this. Instead they pour it out on the plate while they recount the ten plagues of Exodus. Luke 22.46.
3. The cup of salvation filled to overflowing. All drink of this. Ps. 23.
4. The cup of the kingdom. This looks to the future. Mark 14.25."

The cup of blessing would thus symbolize the blessings of redemption.

**18. Should it be observed on days other than the Lord's Day? What about doing it on Christmas Day or Good Friday?**

In the earliest days of the Church the remembrance gathering does not seem to have been limited to the first day of the week, but a comparison of Acts 2. and 20.7 and also 1. Cor. 16.1. would **suggest** that, as time proceeded, the gatherings of Christians for the remembrance

of their Lord became restricted to the first day of the week.

In view of the heathen origin of Christmas and its unfounded association with our Lord's birth, it is wrong for Christians to link the supper with it. As to Good Friday, it is not the day of His death that is to be remembered, but the fact of His death. The recognition of days and months characterized Israel, but it has no place in Christianity. The only day connected with it is the 'first day of the week', the Lord's Day, an imperial day as it were for the believer.

**19. Should it be observed morning or evening? Does the word 'supper' suggest that it should be observed in the evening?**

The word 'supper' is used in a variety of ways and with a variety of meanings in the New Testament. It is evident that the question of the time of the day does not enter into its use in the parable of Luke 14.15-24. The same is to be said of the supper of the Great God in Rev. 19. and of the use of the word 'sup' in the letter to the church at Laodicea. (Rev. 3.20).

At the institutional supper it was evening, but there is nothing in the New Testament epistles to suggest that such a time element enters into the observance of the supper. The hour most convenient is the hour to observe it.

However, it is well to draw attention to the fact that it is the first of the assembly activities mentioned in 1. Cor. Ch. 11 with its emphasis on the supper with its priestly ministry precedes Chs. 12-14 with their exposition of the gifts and the exercise of the prophetic ministry. The first is Godward and should have the prior claim.

**20. Should the bread be unleavened or otherwise?**

Doubtless the bread which our Lord took on the night in which the supper was instituted was the kind of bread used by Jews on occasions such as the Passover—unleavened bread. However in the portions in which instruction is given as to the observance of the supper there is nothing said as to the kind of bread to be used. The Scriptures simply speak of the 'bread' or the 'loaf'. The reference to unleavened bread in 1. Cor. 5.7 is not to material

bread but to that which should characterize the believer spiritually and morally. Malice and wickedness, spoken of as leaven, are to be put away, as they will corrupt the life and testimony of both the individual and the assembly. The 'unleavened bread of sincerity and truth' refers to the life of the believer, patterned after the life of our Lord, in whom there was no leaven—no sin. Redemption through the sacrifice of the true Paschal Lamb and sanctification by the Spirit are thus joined together. The one is expected to produce or give birth to the other.

## **21. Should the wine be fermented or otherwise ?**

It would not be wine if it had not passed through the process of fermentation. So, evidently the wine used at the institution of the supper was what is spoken of as fermented wine. But in the instructions given by the Lord then, or to Paul later by revelation, nothing is said as to the character of the contents of the cup. We read of the cup as representing its contents, but its contents are not specified. As the gospel was to be preached in the uttermost part of the world, the instructions given are such as can be carried out in places where wine is not easily if at all procurable.

As the Lord in the Old Testament gave very specific instructions on such matters as the kind of bread to be used at the passover, and the bones of the lamb not to be broken, we would expect that were the type of wine to be used a matter of importance, we should have plain instructions regarding it from the Lord. Palestine was a land of corn and wine, and the emblems chosen by the Lord represented the staple foods of the people.

It is very important that we should be occupied with the Lord Himself, and the spiritual realities of the supper, rather than with the elements, the externals and the accidents of the supper.

## **22. As the Lord washed the feet of the disciples before instituting the supper, are we to understand that this 'feet-washing' is to form an integral part of the remembrance gathering today ?**

There was no instruction by the Lord that it be so done, and we have no record in the Acts that the Apostles thus practised it, nor have we any teaching in the

epistles which would suggest that such a ceremony was to be associated with the observance of the supper.

The washing of the disciples' feet had a spiritual significance as stated by the Lord Himself. Its counterpart to-day is to be found in the words "Let a man examine himself and so let him eat . . . and drink". (1 Cor. 11. 28).

**23. Should the same brother give thanks for the bread and for the cup ?**

As to this we are left without any instruction, hence there must be perfect freedom in the matter. It is not likely that the thanksgiving of our Lord was for the element, but praise in view of what His sufferings and death as symbolized in them would accomplish.

**24. Does the one who breaks the loaf do it in a representative character, officially as it were, for others, as a priestly act ? or does he merely act as the servant of the assembly in so doing ?**

Just as in the passover there were no instructions as to the necessity for any priest to function, as it was a family gathering, so in the instructions regarding the 'Breaking of Bread' there is a total absence of ritual. At the institution of the supper the Lord said, "I am among you as he that serveth" (Luke 22. 27). And it is in this capacity only that the one who breaks the loaf ministers to the assembled company. He does it as a convenience to them. The "bread we break" (1. Cor. 10.16) refers to the partaking of the loaf, and **not to the action of any individual**. Hence no one may break the loaf in any representative character, or in any official manner as a priestly act. The priestly acts connected with the supper are the giving of thanks and the partaking. The fellowship referred to in 1. Cor. 10.18 was a priestly fellowship. The suggestion that the one who goes to the table and breaks the loaf thereby performs a priestly act is a mould of doctrine which will inevitably produce clerisy. The theory lies at the root of Romish priestcraft.

**25. Should the brother giving thanks go to the table to do so or not ?**

If it is done with the intention of making sure that he is giving thanks for the bread, no fault need be found with a brother for going to the table to do so. But the

words "He **took** bread" lend no support to the idea that the brother giving thanks should go to the table and take the loaf into his hands before and while giving thanks. That is a carnal imitation of the Lord's action; and is repugnant. It savours of the Romish custom of elevating the host. All such sacerdotal pretensions should be avoided and shunned.

## 26. What do the words "This do" refer to ?

It is suggested by some that as the Lord did not partake of the bread or of the cup, the words 'this do' can only refer to that which He Himself did. It is argued that He did something which they did not do, and that they did something which He did not do. He gave thanks and broke the bread, while they partook of it. Similarly He gave thanks for the cup and they drank of it. The advocates of this theory maintain that the words 'this do' can only refer to what He had just done, and that it is the doing of that which constitutes the remembrance ! Pushed to its logical conclusion the interpretation demands that it is not necessary to partake of the bread or of the cup in order to remember the Lord ! That is done when the individual, according to their view, breaks the bread as the representative of the gathered company ! We do not doubt the sincerity of those who hold this view and seek to teach it, but the fallacy of their specious reasoning is exposed by a consideration of the passages concerned.

The custom of breaking bread in mourning and of giving the cup of consolation to the bereaved was commonly practised among the Jews as Jer. 16.7 and other Scriptures show. The two disciples, of whom we read in Luke 24, were going to break bread in mourning for the Lord whom they loved and had hoped would have been their 'kinsman-redeemer'. The Lord changed its character and it became an opportunity for fellowship with Himself—the risen Lord. The same custom still prevails in many countries, as I found when in Cyprus, and as a Swedish sister told me of having seen it in Sweden. The words in question connect the remembrance supper with this custom. They do not refer to some special procedure that is to be followed, but to the eating of the bread and the drinking of the cup in remembrance of Himself. While the words 'Take eat' are not to be



found in 1. Cor. 11. (see RV) they are in Matth. 26.25 and must be understood as that which is referred to in the words "This do in remembrance of me." The fact that in connection with the cup it is definitely stated that as oft as we drink of it we are to do it in remembrance of Him, coupled with the fact that there are five other references in 1. Cor. 11.26-29 to eating the bread and drinking the cup confirms one in the view that the words 'this do' are to be interpreted as referring to the partaking of the emblems in remembrance of the Lord. In other words they refer to the supper as a whole and emphasize its purpose.

## **27. Why is the cup mentioned first in 1. Cor. 10.16?**

The cup, being symbolic of the blood, leads to the contemplation of the death of Christ. It is Christ on the Cross that is therein represented. The bread, being symbolic of the Church in this verse, leads to the contemplation of Christ as its Head, Christ exalted. This connects it with the day of Pentecost. Hence there is a definite historical order followed in the verse. Moreover it is by virtue of the cross that we are in the body, so there is a doctrinal order as well. The emphasis in 1. Cor. 10. is on fellowship: the basis of that fellowship is the death of Christ: that involves the shedding of blood, which in turn is specially set forth in the cup. Hence it is mentioned first.

## **28. What is the significance of the expression "the communion of the blood of Christ" and "the communion of the body of Christ"? (1. Cor. 10.16)**

The words 'communion' 'partakers' and 'fellowship' are key words to the understanding of these verses. Two words very similar in meaning are used and thus translated. The word 'koinonia' is rendered 'communion' in v.16; 'partakers' in v. 18, and 'fellowship' in v.20. In the R.V. it is translated 'communion' in each case. It will be seen that it is used in relation to three distinct and definite groups, each with its own table. First there is the Church, the body of Christ, and the table of the Lord with its fellowship and hallowed associations. The Christian, as he drinks of the cup and partakes of the bread, thereby confesses his association and identification with that which they symbolise.

Then reference is made to the fellowship enjoyed by the priestly family in Israel. As they ate of the sacrifices they were thereby identified with the altar, which was spoken of as the 'table of the Lord' (Mal. 1.7, 12). It too had its grave responsibilities and solemn obligations. (Lev. 7.20-21).

Lastly there is the 'table of demons' at which the idolater sat, and with which anyone who partook thereof was thereby identified. That which is offered in sacrifice to idols is in reality offered to demons. It is not merely that they are not offered to God, but offered to a 'no-god'. (Deut 32.17). The one who partook of that which had been offered to idols, in an idol's temple, was thereby having fellowship with demons.

While the words "the communion of the blood of Christ" and the "communion of the body of Christ" indicate that the true basis of Christian fellowship is a common redemption by the blood of Christ, and a common membership in the body of Christ, they are used here to elucidate the true nature and implications of that fellowship, and the obligations which such a fellowship impose upon the believer as a guard against the abuse of his liberty. Christian fellowship is diametrically opposed to the fellowship provided at the 'table of demons': the two are mutually exclusive, the one of the other. It is an impossibility to be a partaker of both. The fellowship Abraham enjoyed with Melchizedek preserved him from accepting the compromising offer of the king of Sodom.

## **29. What is the significance of the use of the pronoun 'we' in 1. Cor. 10.16?**

In ch. 10 the apostle associates himself with them even though he was not at Corinth at the time. In ch. 10. he is not dealing with the actual observance of the supper, but rather correcting their conduct during the week. In ch. 11. he is seeking to correct their grave misconduct at the supper, hence the change to 'ye', seeing he was not with them. The words that the Apostle uses "The cup which we bless", signify that all believers everywhere, irrespective of geographical location, partake of the same cup, that is, the cup of blessing. It is the character of the cup as being the cup of blessing that is thereby indicated and emphasized. The use of the singu-

lar therefore does not suggest that there should be only one receptacle on the table, or that it is wrong to have two or more.

### **30. What is the 'table of demons' ?**

For the Corinthians it meant partaking in the idol's temple (8.10) of that which had been offered to idols. For us today it may apply to anything which the devil may provide to entice us away or alienate our affections from Christ. In James 4.4 the friendship of the world is stigmatized as adultery in the same way as idolatry is in the Old Testament, and referred to in 1. Cor. 10.

The sacrifice on the altar, and the food on the table were intimately connected. The latter stemmed from the former. Attendance at the table indicated fellowship with what occurred at the altar, and identification with that system.

### **31. What do the words "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy" mean ?**

The word 'jealousy' is used here in the same sense as in the Old Testament, where we read that God is a jealous God. It is not synonymous with envy. God is jealous of His people's affections in the sense that He will not allow them to share them with another, and alien lover. The words are suggestive of the "jealousy-offering" (Num. 5). By drinking of the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons the Corinthians were provoking the Lord to use the rod of discipline on them.

### **32. Is there any difference between the Lord's Table and the Lord's Supper ?**

Yes. The Lord's Supper is a term used exclusively of the "Breaking of the Bread," but the expression "the table of the Lord" (RV) is to be found in the Old Testament. (Mal. 1.7,12). And in Luke 22.29-30 the Lord refers to it in connection with the coming kingdom. He said to His disciples that they would be privileged to eat and drink at His table in the kingdom. But the 'supper' has no connection with Israel or with the kingdom. In Malachi it is the altar of burnt-offering that is spoken of as the "table of the Lord", and it refers to the provision the Lord made thereby for the sustenance of the priestly family. The sacrifice of 1. Cor. 5.7; the death of Christ, was once for all. It will never be repeated. The table of 1. Cor.

10. is that into which the believer is introduced by the death of Christ. It is illustrated by the way in which the Lord fed His people in the wilderness. The eating of the manna and the drinking of the water was not a ritual observed once a week only. It was a daily fellowship with God into which they were introduced by redemption. The fellowship of the priestly family (v.18) was not something which was limited to once a week either. It was a daily ministration and fellowship. The believer is here viewed as a pilgrim-priest, and is to be sustained therein by the Lord's daily provision. The fellowship connected with the table is not limited to time or place or circumstance. The supper on the other hand, is that which gives collective expression to that fellowship. It is a weekly observance. But it is verily possible to partake of the supper without knowing much of the fellowship of the table, and mercifully, the enjoyment of the fellowship of the table is not contingent upon being able to meet with believers to break bread, precious as that privilege is. The fellowship of ch. 10. is that fellowship with God into which we are not received by man and from which we cannot be put out by man. It was uncleanness that debarred the priest from partaking of the peace-offering, and it is spiritual defilement that breaks the link of communion today.

### **33. What do the words "This is the New Covenant in my blood" signify?**

There is a marked similarity between the institution of the supper and the inauguration of the Old Covenant. On that occasion the Mediator—Moses—said: "Behold the blood of the Covenant which the Lord hath made with you..." (Ex. 24.8). Immediately after doing so, Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and 70 of the elders of Israel went up the mountain. There they did "eat and drink". The new relationship into which Israel had been brought with Jehovah was thus celebrated by a banquet. On the night in which our Lord was betrayed we have Him as the Mediator of the New Covenant telling His own "I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me." (Luke 22.29). In Acts 3.25 the word rendered 'appoint' is used with regard to the old Covenant, and in Heb. 10.16 it is used with regard to the New Covenant. Whereas the New Covenant is one into which Israel will, as a nation, yet enter, its spiritual

blessings are ours today. Its unconditional terms as to the remission of sins and the future kingdom would give us to understand that the Lord intended the memorial supper to be a banquet of joy. The golden thread of glory is to be traced all through the teaching given to the eleven on that night. The cup then is the reminder of the sacrifice by which our sins were put away, and an earnest of the felicity of the coming kingdom and glory.

#### **34. What does it mean to eat and drink unworthily ?**

The individual and mutual behaviour of the Corinthian Christians when they thus gathered to celebrate the supper was unworthy of the redemption accomplished by the death of Christ which they professed to announce thereat. By drunkenness and despising the church of God on the part of some, they denied two essential results of that redemption, namely sanctification and the oneness of the redeemed family of God.

Eating and drinking unworthily is said in v.29 to be failure to discern the body, or the true spiritual significance of the emblems, and therefore the true character of the supper. Thereby they were guilty with regard to the body and blood of the Lord. They failed to discern that participation in the supper demanded a spiritual and moral conformity to the form or mould of doctrine connected with it and what it commemorated.

God made provision whereby the priests in Israel were to wash their hands and feet at the laver whenever they went in before the Lord or ministered on His behalf to the people. They were to wash at the laver lest they die. (Ex. 30.21). To minister with defiled hands was to do so unworthily. (Comp. Ps. 26.6. 24.3-6).

#### **35. What do the words "many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep" (RV) mean ?**

By eating and drinking unworthily they ate and drank judgment to themselves. They had failed to judge or discern themselves (v.31), that is, that their conduct was unseemly and a denial of their profession. They not only failed to recognise it, they failed to readjust it. Hence they came under the chastising hand of the Lord. Those thus judged became physically weak and sick and some had died.

In ch. 10.11 it is said that the events therein related of Israel's early history "**happened to them for examples.**" A parallel may be drawn between these and the happenings in the church at Corinth which are an illustration from the early days of the church. In both cases the acts of discipline were singular and summary. God does not seem to visit His people generally in this way nowadays, but the fact that he did so once indicates how seriously He regards the failure.

**36. Should thanksgiving be ascribed to the Son as well as to the Father, or should it be ascribed to the Father only?**

The normal procedure in the New Testament is for prayer and praise to be addressed to the Father through the Son. "But of the doxologies found in the New Testament 9 are to the Father; 2 are to the Father and the Son; while 5 are addressed to the Son alone." (WRL) These five are 1. Tim. 6.16. 2. Tim. 4.18. Heb. 13.21. 2. Pet 3.18. Rev. 1 : 6. Prayer is also addressed to the Lord directly as in Rom. 10.13 and Acts 2.21. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Acts. 7.59-60 "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." "Lord lay not this sin to their charge." 2. Cor. 12.8 "I besought the Lord thrice." Then again Christians are spoken of as those who "call upon the name of the Lord." (1. Cor. 1.1-2. 2 Tim. 2.22). "The emphasis in 1. Cor. 11. on the word "Lord" and the occurrences of "me and "my" suggest that this is an occasion on which we can appropriately address the Lord Himself.'" (PP).

Acts 13:2 definitely states that the church at Antioch "Ministered to the Lord," a word expressive of priestly MINISTRY. (Heb. 10:11). It is rendered "worshipping" by one translator.

In the light of these examples it should be evident that there is Scripture warrant for addressing the Lord Jesus directly in prayer and thanksgiving. But let there be due reverence. Expressions such as "dear Lord" and "dear Jesus" are objectionable. They should not be used as they have not the sanction of New Testament usage. They savour of sentiment, a natural sweetness, represented in the honey which the Israelite was forbidden to add to the meal-offering.

### **37. Should there be ministry before the breaking of bread or after ?**

In New Testament days, just as to-day in many parts of the world, there was but one meeting on the first day of the week. Combined with the breaking of bread was the ministry of the Scriptures, or the prophetic ministry. But in many lands, conditions are such that it is more convenient to have meetings specially convened for the breaking of bread, and others for the ministry of the Scriptures. As the remembrance of the Lord is the more specific purpose of the gathering for the Lord's supper, any ministry before should have this in mind. It should be ministry calculated to lead to thanksgiving and worship; and as it is the gathering of the week at which most of the believers make an effort to be present, there should be an exercise of heart on the part of responsible brethren as to ministry to general edification after the supper.

Just as there is a need to be on our guard against the intrusion of ritualism, so there must be a constant vigilant care lest the observance of the supper becomes a mere formality, and lest rules and regulations and human tradition rob it of its soul, and leave us with a lifeless form. A proper spiritual condition is necessary if we are to maintain a Scripturally proper position. Samson bereft of his eyes and power became the sport of the Philistines as he was grinding at the mill. Let us beware lest true Nazariteship be lost and substituted by a proud Pharisaism, which was equally blind, but wist it not.

### **38. What about the liberty of the Spirit and the silence enjoined upon sisters ?**

The words "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty" are often applied or interpreted as referring to the liberty to take part in Christian gatherings. But this is a misapplication and a wrong interpretation of the verse. In the chapter (2. Cor 3) the Apostle is drawing attention to the difference between the ministry of the Old Covenant and that of the New. The one is a ministry of the letter which killeth, illustrated in the fact that 3000 died at the foot of Sinai. The other is a ministry of life as illustrated in the fact that 3000 were saved on

the day of Pentecost. But not only is the new ministry one which brings **life in Christ**, it proclaims **liberty through Christ**, a liberty of access to God which was not possible under the old economy. Then the way into the holiest was not made manifest: now it is. This is the liberty referred to in the verse above quoted. Finally this new ministry will produce **likeness to Christ**.

As those gathered together are expected to say "Amen" at the giving of thanks (1. Cor. 14.16) it is evident that the one who gives thanks does so as the representative of the assembled company. That is one reason for the injunction "I will therefore that the men pray in every place" (1. Tim. 2.8). The same Scripture insists that they should be men whose lives are clean and exemplary, men who lift up holy hands, without wrath (manward) or doubting (Godward). In the portion where silence is enjoined upon sisters it is important to note that it is twice enjoined upon brethren also under certain circumstances. (Comp. 1. Cor. 14.28, 30, 34). The spiritual will acknowledge that the Apostle wrote by the commandment of the Lord. (RV) and will seek to glorify the Lord by rendering a glad obedience thereto. Sisters will therefore wear a head-covering as a token of their subjection, and also because of the Angels. Their behaviour would thereby seem to be an object lesson to unseen powers as an illustration of the subjection of the Church to Christ.

### **39. What about the leading of the Spirit at the gathering?**

Instruction relative to the believer being led of the Spirit bears more upon the believer's life and conduct than on his activities while gathered in "the assembly". However it is important to remember that the assembly meeting in any given place is viewed as "temple of God", and as it is thus characteristically a sanctuary of God, the Spirit of God dwells in their midst. (1. Cor. 3.16) In view of this it is incumbent on those who take part to be exercised as to what is the mind of the Spirit. The word used in connection with the offering of the sacrifice of praise, that is the fruit of the lips, **giving thanks, or confessing** to His name, (Heb. 13.16) may suggest a certain oneness of mind on the part of those thus gathered. In order to correct the carnal exercise of gift in Corinth the



Apostle urged upon them two essential and vitally important principles. They were to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ. (14.37), and this is only possible through the Holy Spirit's ministry (12.3). They were also to remember that the edification of others should be the paramount aim of all ministry. Each one was not to be anxious just to say his piece, or read his favourite portion, or give out his favourite hymn or Psalm. (14.26). Many a gathering is spoiled by brethren following such practices, coming with their sermonettes and chosen hymns. There is a world of difference between such behaviour and a godly exercise as to the need of the saints.

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Joshua was deceived as to the true character of the Gibeonites because he looked on their victuals, their bread and wine ! How the archenemy has made traffic of the supper ! Thousands are satisfied with a mere form, a mere imitation of the reality. It is well to remember that husks are the food of the far country ! Even the Levite whose life was so glaringly contradictory to the Scriptures which he was supposed to teach, would boastfully claim that he was in need of nothing : he had bread and wine ! (Judges 19.19). How Laodicean like !

May it be ours to enter into the meaning of the salutation of the Lord in the letter to the assembly at Philadelphia : "These things saith . . . He that is **true** . . ." He not only stands in contrast to all that is false, but is the substance of all the types and shadows. As we will go on to know Him thus will we be delivered and preserved from all that is merely formal for it is sadly possible to have the form, even of godliness, and yet be bereft of its power. The carnal mind would wrap in ritual and mystery, or formulate rules and regulations to govern that which is left us in such simplicity for responsive affection.

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